

342 a wooden ladder or by an ascending series of stones projecting from the wall of the building.

[251] The flat roofs are used extensively in the sunny part of the year. Apricots, almonds, and grapes are set out on them to dry. Many householders ornament them with potted plants and receive guests on them. In the heat of midsummer, the interiors of the houses tend to be stuffy at night since the gentle breezes do not penetrate inside. Consequently, all who can, sleep on the roof (or terrace) under a brush shelter called *kbaymi* ("tent").

Although no two houses are exactly the same, it is legitimate to classify all of them into a number of types, which are indices of successive eras in construction and design.

The first, which still has the greatest number of examples, has two subtypes. By far the most numerous of these has one room on the upper level, few windows, but often more than one door, and a flat earth roof. The lower level (*qabl*) is designed as a stable and storeroom and frequently consists of a long, low barrel-vault. The roof of the upper level (living quarters for the family) may or may not be supported on masonry pillars and arches, in addition to the outer walls. The walls are usually very thick, often exceeding three feet, for the old style of construction was two (dry-laid) stone walls with a rubble fill between them. The roof of the old-style house is constructed as follows: round or semi-round beams are laid from the top of one wall to the opposite one at right angles to the long axis of the house. A layer of shorter, thick sticks is placed across the beams, and then a layer of finer sticks is added. Finally, a layer of earth about a foot thick is [412] packed down as hard as possible on top. To prevent leaking, the roof must be packed down several times each winter; for this purpose every old-style house is equipped with a stone roller (*mabji*), weighing about a hundred pounds. These houses are dark inside because of the paucity of windows which are unglazed and closed by solid wooden shutters. To counteract this, the inside plastered walls are either whitewashed or painted very pale blue. There is every reason to suppose that this style of house is very ancient indeed. However, none of the existing examples of it in Munif is probably more than a hundred and fifty years old, and [356] some are probably as little as sixty years old. Repairs—sometimes amounting to rebuilding—and alterations have always been a matter of course. However, no houses of this type have been built since the early 1890's. Wenkerse (1946, p. 267) says that this traditional Lebanese house is well adapted to its environment. It provides insulation against the chilly blasts of winter and against the heat of summer as effectively as any essentially primitive construction could.

The second subtype of old-style house has only two examples in the village. The construction is essentially the same as the foregoing, but the following features are added: two or more distinctly separate rooms in the upper level; sculptured ornamentation, including fully round columns, around the windows; and glazed ornamental windows, with rather elaborate designs formed by the lead mullions,